

Message Text

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43

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 270512Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6041

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 4213

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, LA, US

SUBJECT: CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS IN EVENT OF SUSPENSION OR
BREAK IN U.S.-LAO RELATIONS

REF: VIENTIANE 4527

1. I BELIEVE EMBASSY VIENTIANE HAS OBJECTIVELY AND CORRECTLY
ANALYZED PROSPECTS FOR PROTECTION OF AMERICAN INTERESTS IN
LAOS IN EVENT OF SUSPENSION OR BREAK IN U.S.-LAO RELATIONS
(REFTEL).

2. AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY IN VIENTIANE IS INDEED SMALL, AND
AMBASSADOR BORTHWICK HAS NOT RPT NOT APPEARED TO BE PARTICULARLY
ENERGETIC. HE IS TO LEAVE LAOS FIRST WEEK OF AUGUST OR SO AND
IS DUE TO BE REPLACED BY JOHN A. FORSYTHE, AGE 56, PRESENTLY
AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO TANZANIA. AGREEMENT IN LAOS
HAS BEEN REQUESTED FOR FORSYTHE BUT NOT RPT NOT YET RECEIVED.
FORSYTHE HAS SPENT MOST OF HIS CAREER ABROAD, MAINLY IN
EUROPE, THE U.N., AND AFRICA, AND WE HAVE NO SIGNIFICANT
IMPRESSION OF HIM.

3. EMBASSY VIENTIANE'S CONCLUSION THAT JAPAN MAY BE BEST
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CHOICE TO PROTECT U.S. INTERESTS IN LAOS SEEMS TO HAVE MUCH

TO RECOMMEND IT. I BELIEVE THIS POSSIBILITY SHOULD BE
EXAMINED CAREFULLY BEFORE EXPLORING OTHER ALTERNATIVES.

4. WHILE I SENSE THAT ON BALANCE AUSTRALIAN LABOR GOVERNMENT
WOULD BE AVERSE TO PROTECTING U.S. INTERESTS IN LAOS, GOA
DID AGREE WITH ALACRITY TO MAKE INQUIRIES INTO STATUS OF
AMERICAN CITIZENS CAPTURED BY COMMUNISTS IN BAN ME THUOT IN
MARCH AND MIGHT JUST BE WILLING TO CONSIDER PROTECTION OF OUR
INTERESTS IN LAOS. PROTECTION OF OUR INTERESTS IN LAOS COULD
PRESUMABLY REQUIRE NUMEROUS CONTACTS WITH COMMUNIST-ORIENTED
PGNU OFFICIALS AND THUS GIVE AUSTRALIA A ROLE TO PLAY IN LAOS
WHICH IT REALLY DOES NOT RPT NOT HAVE AT PRESENT. MUCH MIGHT
DEPEND ON HOW MUCH THERE WOULD BE TO PROTECT AND ADEQUACY OF
AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO DO THE JOB.

5. IN SUM, AUSTRALIA REMAINS A POSSIBILITY, THOUGH BEST
EXPLORED ONLY IF JAPAN DECLINES. I WILL, OF COURSE, TAKE NO
ACTION TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY UNLESS INSTRUCTED.
GREEN

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